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SECOND CARD TO THE PUBLIC,

BY WM. L. BRENT,

REPELLING THE ATTACKS OF H. CLAY,

THROUGH THE LOUISVILLE JOURNAL, HIS ORGAN,

AND HOLDING HIS (CLAY'S) CHARACTER

UP TO PUBLIC VIEW,

AND SHOWING FURTHER AND CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE

OF HIS

PERFIDY AND MENDACITY,

AND DENOUNCING HIM TO THE PUBLIC.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED AT THE GLOBE OFFICE,

1841.

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C A R D .

WASHINGTON CITY, Aug. 30, 1841.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE GLOBE:

GENTLEMEN: I am under the necessity of asking a favor of you once more. I have been most shamefully attacked, as I believe, at the instance of H. Clay, through his confidential organ, the "Louisville Journal." The scurrilous production has been republished in several papers, and among them, much to my astonishment, in the "Richmond Whig." I have applied to the Editors of the latter paper to do me the justice to publish my reply, and they have refused it, unless it was "restricted within moderate limits, and confined to a defence of yourself [myself] from the imputations contained in the article alluded to." This offer I am not disposed to accept. If you will not give the accompanying reply a place in your paper, I shall be unable to defend myself before a generous and enlightened public. I have been much injured; and I appeal to you to afford me an opportunity to protect myself, and to expose the miserable shifts resorted to by Mr. Clay and his hired "writers" to cover his retreat in the affair with,

Yours, most respectfully,

WM. L. BRENT.

— SECOND CARD.

The dastardly and libellous attacks, made upon my private character, through the confidential organs of H. Clay, compel me to appear once more before the public. So low and vulgar are those attacks, they would be unworthy of my notice, did I not feel satisfied that they were authorized by H. Clay, and emanated from his suggestions. While that individual, affecting a lofty indifference to the "brand" which I have affixed on his forehead, stands mute at the bar of public opinion; he has let loose his *bloodhounds*, in all quarters, to prey upon an humble individual, whose only crime has been to quarrel with this modern Cæsar, to strip him of his "false plumage," and to exhibit him in his true character, to the public. But I tell these men of Rhoderic Dhu, that "the quarry is at bay," and I do not mean to be written down, or hunted down, by all the serfs who can be enlisted under the feudal banner of this false chieftain. I tell Mr. Clay, also, that his intimation to me, through the "Louisville (Ky.) Journal," his organ, to challenge in "mortal combat" "the num-

berless Whig editors," who offer to take up his quarrel in the hopes of having me assassinated, by some one of these hirelings, shall not avail him. I will notice no one but himself. Let the attacks of others be what they may, my quarrel is with their master; and I will keep that issue before the public, as long as I have life and strength. The servile presses, tied to his car, will not do the poor justice of publishing my remarks, which they undertake to criticise. If they are not afraid to let their readers hear both sides, why not publish my former "card" and the present one? Let the people read them, and decide for themselves.

Why have certain Whig presses assailed me in this matter, and refused, at the same time, to give me a chance to be heard? Is it not a *personal* affair between H. Clay and myself, with which *politics* have nothing to do? Have I not always been a firm and undeviating Whig, and am I not so at this time? Why, then, do any of the presses of my own party refuse to do me justice, and to show "fair play" in a personal quarrel? Have I not the right to resent an injury from Mr. Clay, and to treat him, in a personal matter, as I would treat any other man? I had supposed, that in so free and enlightened a country as this, there was *no man* that could set himself up, or be set up by his tools, as *privileged* above those rules which govern all other men. Mr Clay's instructions to his friends, by the course he is now pursuing, seems shortly to be this: "I am your leader—you can't do without me, and although I may be as black as S.n, you must not attempt to whitewash me, for you can't do it, but you must vilify all persons who assail me." I have yet to learn that the talents of H. Clay are indispensable to this great nation—for indispensable they must be, if he can reach the highest honors, who is covered with deceit, perfidy, and falsehood, as with a leprosy. So far as I am concerned, I am now willing that he should rest upon his mock dignity, and look down upon me, *if he can*, in his lordly and monarchical pile. It is ridiculous in him or his friends to say, that I am not his equal. I feel myself, as an honorable man, far above him, nor can I feel the sting of contempt from that man, of whom the eloquent and distinguished Virginian, John Randolph, said in public debate, that "contempt has the property of descending, but she stops far short

of him; he dwells beneath her lowest fall. An hy- perbole for meanness, would be an eclipse for Clay."

As I have neither H. Clay's inflated ideas of his own dignity, or his callousness to accusation, I feel constrained to notice the base slanders which, concocted in Washington, no doubt under his eyes, by his servile crew, have been transmitted abroad, to appear as editorial remarks in his mercenary and subsidised presses. Among those who have distinguished themselves in the low art of defamation, and blackguard scurrility towards me, at the instance, no doubt, of H. Clay, his biographer and confidential organ, the editor of the "Louisville Journal" stands foremost. From so hackneyed and practised a traducer of character, I did not expect any thing else but torrents of vulgar abuse, for daring to assail the immaculate H. Clay, even in a personal affair; and I have not been disappointed. The object of H. Clay, in encouraging such attacks, is to destroy me and my family, if he can, by attacking my private affairs, and by assailing my private character, as reasons to justify his course towards me, and artfully to draw off public attention from himself. In this he cannot succeed. His arrows fall harmless at my feet. His own letter of the 23d of June last to me, long after he had been guilty of what I charged him with, and after the death of General Harrison and the nomination to the Senate of Mr. Fendall, gives the lie direct to these newly fabricated reasons. For, in that letter, he admits the respectability of my standing and character, by saying to me, that my insulting language should not "be allowed by me [Clay] to break off our friendship." This declaration admits, at least, that he regards me (as he could not otherwise do) in point of character, as his equal, and my friendship as worthy of retaining. When a man fears to do that, in an honorable point of view, which he is bound to do, he and his satellites can easily assign reasons, but to honorable men, they will not be satisfactory. If my only object was to expose the subterfuge to which H. Clay had resorted, to get out of the difficulty in which I have placed him, and to clear himself from the odium now attached to him as a "dishonored man," I might stop here; but as he has dared to arraign my "moral character," and to speak of my "private affairs," I hope the public will permit me to defend myself; and if, in doing so, I shall feel myself compelled to assail him, he has no one to blame but himself.

So rabid and hyena like is the attack upon me, in seeking to rend me to pieces, by the publications alluded to, that the vulnerable points in Mr. Clay's own character have been entirely forgotten; and I have been foolishly assailed as guilty of "vices," which, all the world knows, he is vastly more distinguished for, than ever I could be, if all were admitted which is said against me. I am accused in the publications alluded to as being guilty of "a disregard of public decency," of the most "shameless debaucheries," and of being "lost to self-respect, and to every sense of paternal duty!" Such low contemptible scurrility is not worth noticing, and is an insult to the moral feeling of the public. I deny the base slanders in every respect; and I cast every one of them back upon H. Clay himself, to

whom they belong. I most positively assert that I never was in a brothel, or in a house of assignation since I have resided in Washington city, or elsewhere, in my life: I never was in a gambling house, or gambled. I never was accused of being a blackleg or rouse, I am no drunkard. I have never been the cause of any disgraceful nightly quarrels in the public streets by abandoned female characters, and I have never committed an act which could subject me to the charges made so unfeelingly against me by Mr. Clay and his reptiles. I have been a resident of Washington for about ten years, and I may say of the District nearly twenty years, for whilst in Congress, I generally remained here during the whole year; and I challenge H. Clay to produce *one* solitary individual, who can prove the reverse of these assertions. In the community of Washington, there are many who know this great *moral exemplar*, whose nod is the law to his slaves, and "whose chief enunch has been been ordered to strangle me." Let his friends beware how they tread upon the "moral character" of others, or a mine may be sprung before the whole country, which will develop another hideous feature of their prophet, now covered by the silver veil of credulity and delusion. Before all the world I throw the gauntlet to H. Clay, and challenge a comparison of his "moral character" with mine. Put me through the "fiery ordeal," and it will be found, that whilst I do not profess to be either a saint or a puritan, my morals, to say the least of them, will compare with his. If all the base slanders were true, it does not belong to him to throw them up to me. Is that which is a crime in one man, a virtue in another? Before Mr. Clay permitted his serfs to assail me for the want of a proper sense of "paternal duty," he ought to have reflected upon his own sense of "paternal duty," ah! yes, and his sense of *conjugal* duty, too. It is degrading to human nature, that he who knows what his own conduct is, should sit down quietly, and hear me abused by his minions on such ground as this. I am ashamed to be compelled to reply to such charges, but I beg a generous public to make allowance for my excitement at so base an attempt to injure me, and to wound the feelings of my friends.

This charge against my moral character is only carrying out a deep game of "conspiracy" against me, commenced the moment it was suspected that my old friend, General Harrison, more mindful of former friendships than Mr. Clay, might offer the office of Attorney of this District to me. Those vile and cowardly "conspirators," sought to impress the public mind, through anonymous letter writers, with the idea that General Harrison was prejudiced against me, and would not stop at my house on account of my moral conduct. The evidence of such "conspiracy" is contained in the following extract from a letter of S. S. Southworth, (the anonymous letter writer, who first put it in the Boston Times,) to a gentleman of the first respectability in Washington city, who handed it to me, to use as I thought proper.

"HOPE ISLAND, NARRAGANSETT BAY,

"June 16, 1841.

"MY DEAR SIR: I received a note from the editor of the 'Boston Times,' (a paper in which a similar publication to the

one in the "Louisville Journal" was made,) informing me that he had published a letter, libellous of Colonel Brent, that I was the author, and demanding of me to surrender up my name to that gentleman. As soon as I obtained a copy of the ("Times") paper, and had read the offensive article, I discovered that my *original* had been materially changed in its language, grammatical construction and bearing; but I nevertheless, at the instant, addressed Colonel Brent, gave him my name, and denied all design to libel him.

"I know there was a deep laid conspiracy among some of the Whigs of . . . and of the city to destroy him, and I am sorry to add, that I fear the conspirators were too successful.

"For Colonel Brent I always cherished the most profound respect.

"Not wishing to stand in your estimation as a cowardly and base profligate, libeller, I have entered into these explanations, and to you I hope they will be satisfactory.

"Yours, &c.

"S. S. SOUTHWORTH."

To what extremes do not men go, who secretly conspire to injure the character of another? What honest or honorable man can or will believe any statement, emanating from such conspirators as these? Yet I am assailed to promote Mr. Clay's views, by such despicable combinations.

It is also insinuated, that here in Washington, I am not respected. Let facts speak to this charge. When General Harrison was about being inaugurated as President of the United States, I was chosen by a large majority of the Whigs of Washington, selected to make the appointment, in opposition to others who were named, as the *Chief Marshal* on the 4th of March last, to preside over and control the honors paid to our distinguished favorite on that day, and to head, in civic procession, not less than forty thousand freemen assembled upon that occasion. Would I have been so appointed, above all others, upon so honorable an occasion, had I not been respected by the people of my own city, where I had resided so long? Would they have given me "the post of honor" on that occasion, if I was viewed in the light Mr. Clay now wishes to represent me? Again, I call upon those slanderers to look at the testimonials of a majority of the Whigs of the District, now on file in the State Department, expressing their high confidence in my character and abilities, and expressing a pleaure at hearing that I had been offered the place of Attorney of the District by General Harrison.

The Louisville Journal charges that my "infamy is well known at Washington." When I would ask, was this infamy discovered, and when did it come to the knowledge of the *pure and undefiled Henry Clay*? It must have come to his knowledge (if at all) either before or after the 22d June last, on which day he wrote me a letter, declaring me *worthy of his friendship*. If before that date, then he has debased himself in his note of the 22d June last, by striving to retain the friendship of an infamous man. If my alleged infamy was made known to Henry Clay after the 22d June last, it is no palliation or protection for his treacherous conduct to me *previous to that date*. I have thus shown, by Mr. Clay's written avowal of "friendship" for me on the 22d June last, that he either then knew my imputed infamy, and knowing it, was base enough to rank me as worthy his "friendship," or that he committed the *perfidy and violation of his pledge*, while he was ignorant of ought to render me unworthy of his "friendship;"

for it is but a poor subterfuge to justify Clay's shameless treachery before 22d June, by a subsequent discovery that I am infamous. This door of retreat then is closed upon him, notwithstanding the efforts of his friends to screen their dishonored chief, and he stands before the public convicted of the *rankest treachery* or of *knowingly* consorting with an "infamous" man. If Henry Clay justifies his silence towards me by an intimation that I am too infamous for his notice, I pronounce him to be a *base slanderer*, and if he does not justify it on that ground, I pronounce him to be a *dastardly craven to cower under my insults*. Let his friends choose the alternative.

Mr. Clay, through his presses, is not satisfied with an attack upon my "moral character," but with a view to rouse my creditors into ruthless action towards me, to injure and destroy my credit, and to ruin me, charges me with being "insolvent." The time was, and within his recollection, when I was far from being "insolvent"—at a time when a similar charge was unfeelingly made against him by his enemies. Did I then consider him, for that cause, as beneath my notice? or did I abandon him? The recollection of my conduct upon that occasion, must now cover his cheeks with shame, if ambition has not eradicated every honorable and grateful feeling. Hear what he then said. I extract his then opinion, from a letter addressed by him, to the public, and which will be found in the 34th volume of *Niles's Register*, page 295.

"WASHINGTON 25th March, 1823.

"DEAR SIR: It is a matter also of consolation to me to know that this wanton exposure of my private affairs, could do me no pecuniary prejudice. It has indeed led to one incident, which was, at the time, a source of pleasure and of pain. A friend lately called on me, at the instance of other friends, and informed me that they were apprehensive that my private affairs were embarrassed, and that I allowed this embarrassment to prey upon my mind. He came, therefore, with their authority to tell me, that they would contribute any sum that I might want to relieve me. The emotions which such a proposition excited may be conceived by honorable men. I felt most happy to undeceive them, and to decline their benevolent proposition.

I am, with great respect,

"H. CLAY."

Mr. Clay knows who those friends were who made him the "benevolent" offer to "relieve" him, and who that *friend* was who called upon him. He can say whether I was not one of them, and whether I was not the "friend" who, in person, called upon him. Some of those gentlemen now live—some have passed away forever. I will further say, that I have ever possessed the personal friendship of them all. Upon this charge I will say no more than to add, I do not deny but that, in these times, I am embarrassed; but as to being "insolvent," I am not, and never will be, unless Mr. Clay, and his tools, can excite my hitherto indulgent creditors, to crush me at once against their own interests. Let the public contrast my conduct to Mr. Clay, in 1823, with his to me in 1841.

The "Louisville Journal" contains another statement: "That the Marshal of the District of Columbia, on being asked whether Brent's (my) name would be received on a bond of between one and two hundred dollars, replied that it would not be taken for a farthing."

I will give the Marshal's reply to this base lie, in his own words:

"WASHINGTON CITY, D. C. August 16, 1841.

"DEAR SIR: In reply to your note of this date, I inform you that the *only* instance in which your name on *any* bond, has been tendered me, was in the case of Francis Johnson, (now living in Louisville, Kentucky,) and I cannot tax my memory with any such remark as has been ascribed to me; *on the contrary*, I referred, as the reason for declining it to an *order of court*, to which, without the sanction of the court, the Marshal was *forbid* to receive the *officers* [of which number I was] of the court as bail.

"Yours, &c.

A. HUNTER."

"Col. WM. L. BRENT.

I should like to know who gave the "Louisville Journal" this information? I can never believe that he derived it from the individual whom I was disposed to serve by becoming his bail and preventing his going to jail.

The same publication says: "That upon the occasion of General Harrison's arrival at Washington, Col. Brent endeavored to prevail on him to attend a dinner party at his house, by way of giving himself consequence; and that certain respectable Whigs found it necessary to interfere and thwart the petty and paltry scheme, by informing the General of Colonel B's infamous character, *is true in every particular*." I pronounce this to be false, and a deliberate lie, in every particular. General Harrison distinguished me as his friend, above all others, by dining with me the very first day after his arrival in Washington, in company with the most distinguished statesmen in the country, and several of the most respectable citizens of the District. The public will be astonished to hear, after this bold assertion of Mr. Clay's organ, that H. Clay himself was of the party.

Goaded on by a fiend's malice, and not satisfied with attacking my "moral character" and my private affairs, I am professionally assailed by Mr. Clay's bloodhounds. I am charged with collecting money from a "Typographical Society," and of not paying "a dollar of it" to the day of the accusation. This is done to create a prejudice against me, with the printers of the country. I never collected one cent for any "Typographical Society" but for the one in Washington, and I paid over every cent I received long before the accusation was made. See the following certificate:

"Having read the charge referred to, I feel it my duty, as Treasurer of the Columbia Typographical Society, to state, as an act of but common justice to Mr. Brent, that he honorably transacted the business which he had in hand for the Society, and paid the same, long since. M. CATON.
August 30, 1841."

Not satisfied with all these charges against me, my "veracity" is impeached. I defy the malignity of H. Clay and his organs, to prove that in any *one* instance, I ever told an untruth. I would feel humiliated, indeed, if I thought that any respectable man would place my veracity upon an equality with H. Clay's, after what I have proved upon him, and after what I will now prove upon him, under his own hand writing. Now, to the proof of his having deliberately stated what he knew at the time was not true. In the following note to me, he says:

WASHINGTON CITY, D. C.
19th June, 1841

"Henry Clay's respects to Col. Brent, and merely to his note he informs him, that during the Presidency of General Harrison he adopted the rule of non-interference with all appointments to which he has adhered generally since the accession of President Tyler."

(Meaning that he did not interfere during the Presidency of General Harrison

to procure the appointment of Mr. Fendall as attorney of this District, with which I charged him; but that he did interfere after the death of Gen. Harrison, with President Tyler, as stated in the same note, which has already been published by me.) In a letter dated upon the 12th of May last, about a month before he made the positive statement in his note to me that he did not interfere with Gen. Harrison in the appointment, he expressly *admits* the fact, that he *did* interfere with President Harrison to get the office for Mr. Fendall, intimating that Gen. Harrison had given him reasons to believe that Fendall would get it; (which I positively deny to be true;) and he concludes by saying to Mr. Tyler, that he then asked the office from him, as he had done from President Harrison. Put these two letters of his, along side of one another, and what can be thought of the veracity of a man who makes such contradictory statements? I need not remind him of the legal maxim, as to the credibility of a witness, "*falsum in uno, falsum in omnibus*." The letter is now on file in the State Department, where it can be seen, and where I saw it. I was refused a copy of the letter, as the rules of the Department do not allow of copies, as Mr. Webster informed me; but Mr. Clay can procure one, and let him publish it, if he dares. President Tyler, and the Hon. Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, cannot deny this statement in regard to a letter which they have both seen. I do not pretend to give the exact words of the letter, but I give its substance and meaning.

Again, I am accused of publishing a confidential letter of General Harrison, in which he declares that, "from Mr. Clay he had received only ungenerous treatment in requital for years of devoted service." Indeed I have recently seen a Clay paper, in which it is charged that no such letter exists, and that it is a forgery. To satisfy the public of the genuineness of the document, I invite all who desire to know the truth, to call upon me and examine the letter for themselves. I deny that the letter was "confidential," or that General Harrison made any secret of his opinion of Mr. Clay. In giving General Harrison's opinion of Mr. Clay's ingratitude to him, I only gave the opinion that General Harrison had expressed of him, publicly, and upon all occasions, to others. I have heard of his speaking of it on steamboats and elsewhere. The "Louisville Journal" admits it to have been his opinion, when he says that the letter to me "was written at a time when the venerable Harrison, almost despairing of the nomination, to which he deemed himself entitled, was known to feel no little exasperation towards Mr. Clay." But I deny, (and I call upon all General Harrison's old friends in Indiana and Ohio, and particularly about Cincinnati, to sustain me in repelling the attack made upon the memory of our old friend,) that General Harrison's feelings towards Mr. Clay, as expressed to me, arose out of a rivalry for the Presidential nomination. They originated from various causes, known to his friends long before General Harrison was spoken of as a candidate for the Presidency. The imputation of such a base motive, as that given by Mr. Clay's organ to General Harrison, is a slander upon the magnanimous character of the departed

hero and statesman. I stigmatize it as a foul libel on a man, who was no less remarkable for his disregard of self-aggrandisement, than his competitor (H. Clay) for the nomination, has proved himself *selfish*. I call upon the friends of General Harrison to rebuke this wanton traducer of the "distinguished dead," that he may exalt the *unworthy living*. I deny, also, that General Harrison ever changed his private opinion of H. Clay as a man. He never retracted his opinion, that "from Mr. Clay he had received only *ungenerous treatment* in requital for years of devoted service." As a political ally of Mr. Clay, General Harrison was not inconsistent in eulogising Mr. Clay's course in opposing their common adversary, and speaking of him as a public man, in his public capacity. If there be any who cannot see the distinction between General Harrison's opinion of Mr. Clay, as expressed to me and other friends, and the language used by him, in his public speeches, it is, because they would desecrate the grave of Harrison with a charge of duplicity, that they may glorify H. Clay.

Having answered the foul aspersions made against me by some prostituted presses, and fearing nothing from their power, as I hope for nothing

from the mercy of this "harpy crew," and having once more charged home upon H. Clay, whose silence, broken in upon by the howling fierceness of his myrmidons, is as impotent of true contempt, as the defence he has caused to be made for him is destitute of prudence. I will remark in conclusion, that I was fully aware, when I published H. Clay as guilty of dishonorable conduct and duplicity towards me, that I should be compelled to stand up, single-handed and alone, an humble individual, contending with all the personal and party influence which he could bring to crush me. My reliance was, and is, on the intelligence and sense of justice of my fellow-citizens, throughout the whole country, not of the servile and desperate few, whose fortunes are embarked in the same vessel with their chief, but in the free, the unbought people, who will give to the poorest, the lowest citizen, as full and impartial a hearing, as to the highest and proudest in the land.

WM. L. BRENT.

WASHINGTON CITY, August 30, 1841.

P. S. I ask all honorable and impartial presses, of both parties, which have published the base libels on me, to give this a place.

WERT BOOKBINDING
JAN 1989
Grantville, PA

